(b) whether there are any plans for India to participate in Galilio the European Lad efforts to create an alternative to the GPS System;

(c) if so, by when the country would join the programme; and

(d) by when it would set up regional navigational systems that would be totally under its control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir. India is planning an Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) which is confined to Indian Region. This System will not be like the GPS of US.

(b) The question of participation is under consideration of Government.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The IRNSS Project is under consideration of Government.

Earthquake vulnerability of Andaman Islands

2587. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andaman Islands are very sensitive to earthquake;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to set up a state of the art laboratory for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Andaman Islands falls in Zone-V of the seismic zoning map of the country published by Bureau of Indian Standards in 2002. As per this map, the country has been divided into four seismic zones, Zone II to Zone V, Zone V is considered to be the most vulnerable to earthquakes, while Zone-ll is the least.

(b) and (c) At present a state-of-the-art seismic observatory is functional at Port Blair to record the earthquake activity in the region. Also, efforts have been initiated to establish a multi-parametric geophysical observatory to monitor different parameters related to earthquake activity.